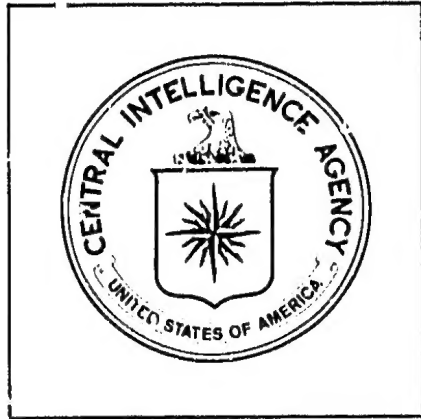


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STAFF NOTES:

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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA



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North Yemen - Saudi Arabia

Yemeni Workers in Saudi Arabia

When North Yemeni Prime Minister al-Ghani visits Riyadh next week to encourage the Saudis to grant additional aid for specific "impact" projects--the Saudi have promised to consider these requests sympathetically--he also intends to bring up the status of North Yemeni workers in Saudi Arabia.

According to a census taken in February 1975, 1.23 million Yemenis are currently abroad. Although the number in Saudi Arabia is not known, the highly visible Yemenis make up a large and rising proportion of the Saudi labor force, estimated at 1.6 million. They are the largest single group of expatriates and may be comparable in size to the native-born labor force. Yemenis are involved almost exclusively in non-agricultural "grunt" labor; dominate the booming construction industry, do the work in the ports, and hold most other unskilled jobs.

Al-Ghani will argue with some justification that Riyadh, despite its dependence on Yemeni labor, treats the Yemenis shabbily and does not enforce existing laws favorable to the workers. He intends to call upon the Saudis to extend to Yemenis the same benefits now available to Saudis and northern Arab expatriates, including a minimum daily wage, regulated hours of work, and coverage under social welfare and social security laws. Without trade unions, and under the constant threat of deportation, Yemeni workers are a docile lot. There has been no significant labor unrest in Saudi Arabia for years.

The flood of remittances from Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia has been of signal importance to Sana's economy, but the exodus of workers is beginning to have some negative impact in North Yemen. It lessens the number available at home, thus increasing the cost of labor. Some construction, public works, and rural development projects have reportedly lagged for lack of labor. [REDACTED]

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Kenya

Kenyatta to Strengthen Ruling Party

President Jomo Kenyatta's decision to revitalize the Kenya Africa National Union (KANU)--the country's sole party since late 1969--appears designed to give him a dependable instrument of pressure against his political opponents. If the long-neglected KANU organization is overhauled, there may be a significant contest for the party's number-two post.

On July 12, Kenyatta held a highly publicized meeting with KANU's 36 district chairmen to get party reorganization under way. The meeting was the first for the group in more than a year; Kenyatta has paid scant attention to KANU over the years.

The party constitution calls for an annual conference at which delegates are supposed to deal with decisions made by the party's top officers. There has been no conference since 1966. The post of KANU secretary general has been vacant since the death of Tom Mboya in 1969, and other top-level party posts have been left unfilled for long periods.

Kenyatta's lack of interest in the party has been imitated by most Kenyans. Periodic attempts to get people to join KANU have flopped.

Kenyatta's willingness to let KANU languish was probably due to his interest in avoiding any competition over control of the party machinery or the succession. In addition, until recently Kenyatta enjoyed tremendous popularity and did not need a party organization to bolster his regime; the cabinet and the civil service were effective instruments of political control.

Kenyatta's problems with public opinion and the recent sacking of three cabinet members for not supporting the government have apparently led him to conclude that a better organized and disciplined party would give him an instrument for controlling his adversaries.

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Kenyatta, who is KANU's president, may propose that the number of vice presidents be reduced from seven to one. If the change is made, the contest for party vice president could have considerable political significance.

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Kenyatta is reportedly pushing the candidacy of former foreign minister Njoroge Mungai. Mungai lost his parliamentary seat in the election in October; Kenyatta has just named him to an appointive seat in parliament. Kenyatta would feel comfortable with Mungai in the KANU vice presidential post, because he is a close relative who could be counted on to look out for the interests of the Kenyatta family and the southern Kikuyu. On the other hand, Mungai, who is neither popular nor an effective administrator, would seem a poor choice to make KANU a vital political force.

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